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(56) Documents cited
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(58) Field of search
UK CL (Edition J) B6A ACA, B6E EDG, B6P PB6
PMAB, G5C CEQ
INT CL^{*} B43L, G09F

(54) Message board

(57) A message board which includes a private message area for receiving and displaying a message; a cover for covering the private message area; and means for locking the cover in position to cover the private message, the locking means being capable of being unlocked to allow the cover to be moved to reveal any message displayed on the private message area.

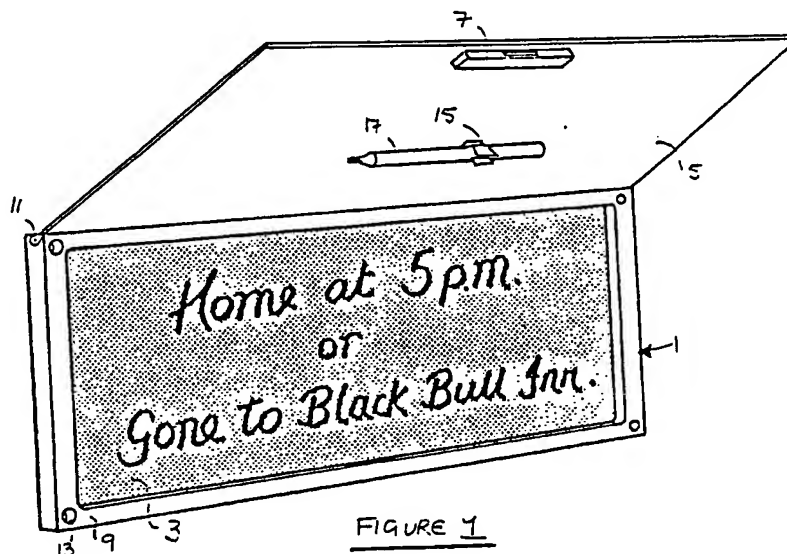


FIGURE 1

At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

The claims were filed later than the filing date within the period prescribed by Rule 25(1) of the Patents Rules 1982.

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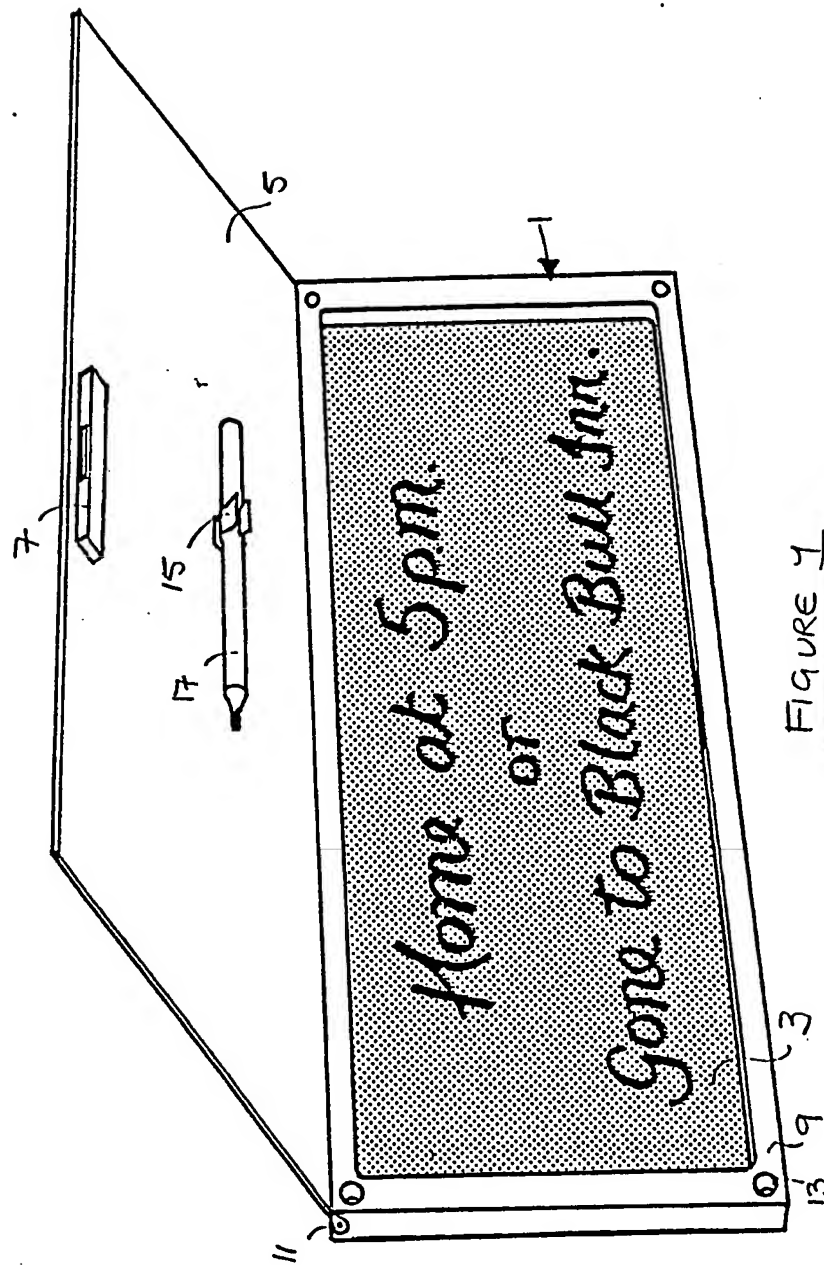


FIGURE 1

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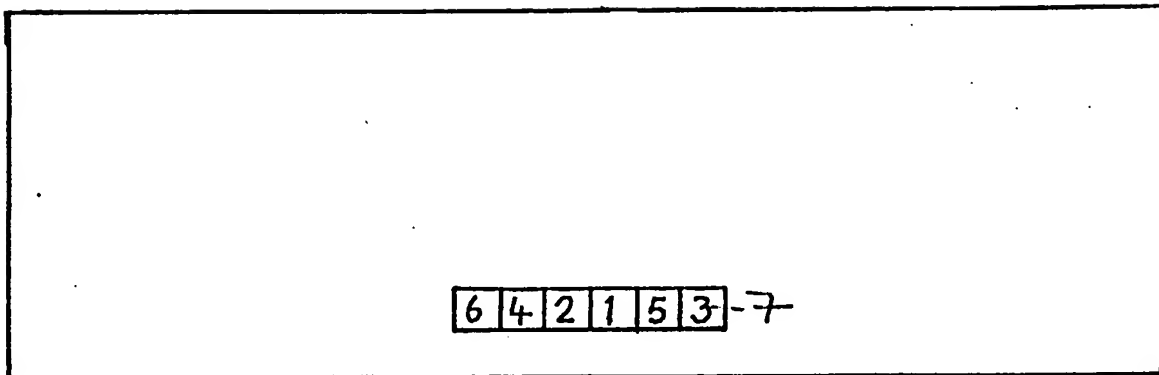


FIGURE 2

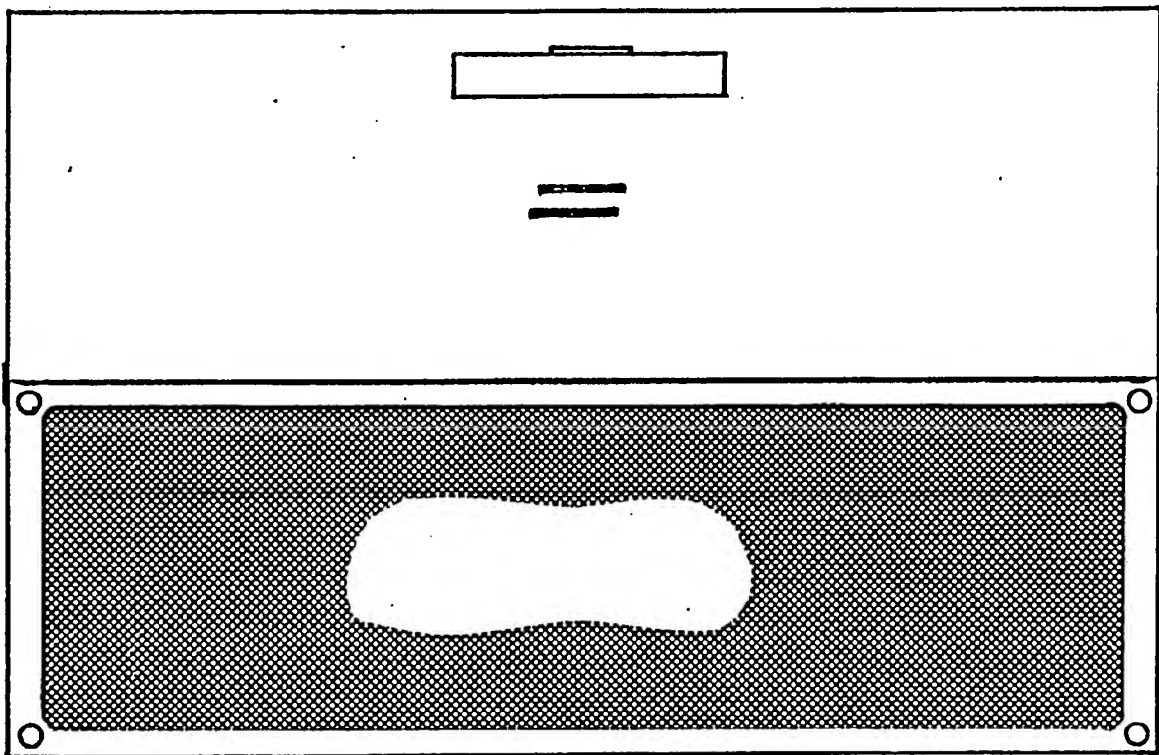


FIGURE 3

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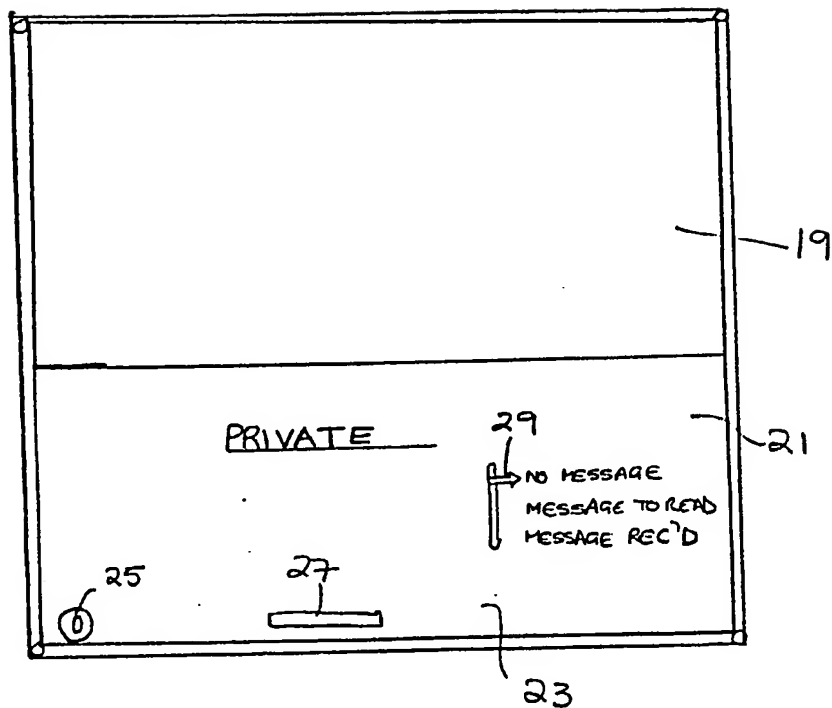


FIGURE 4

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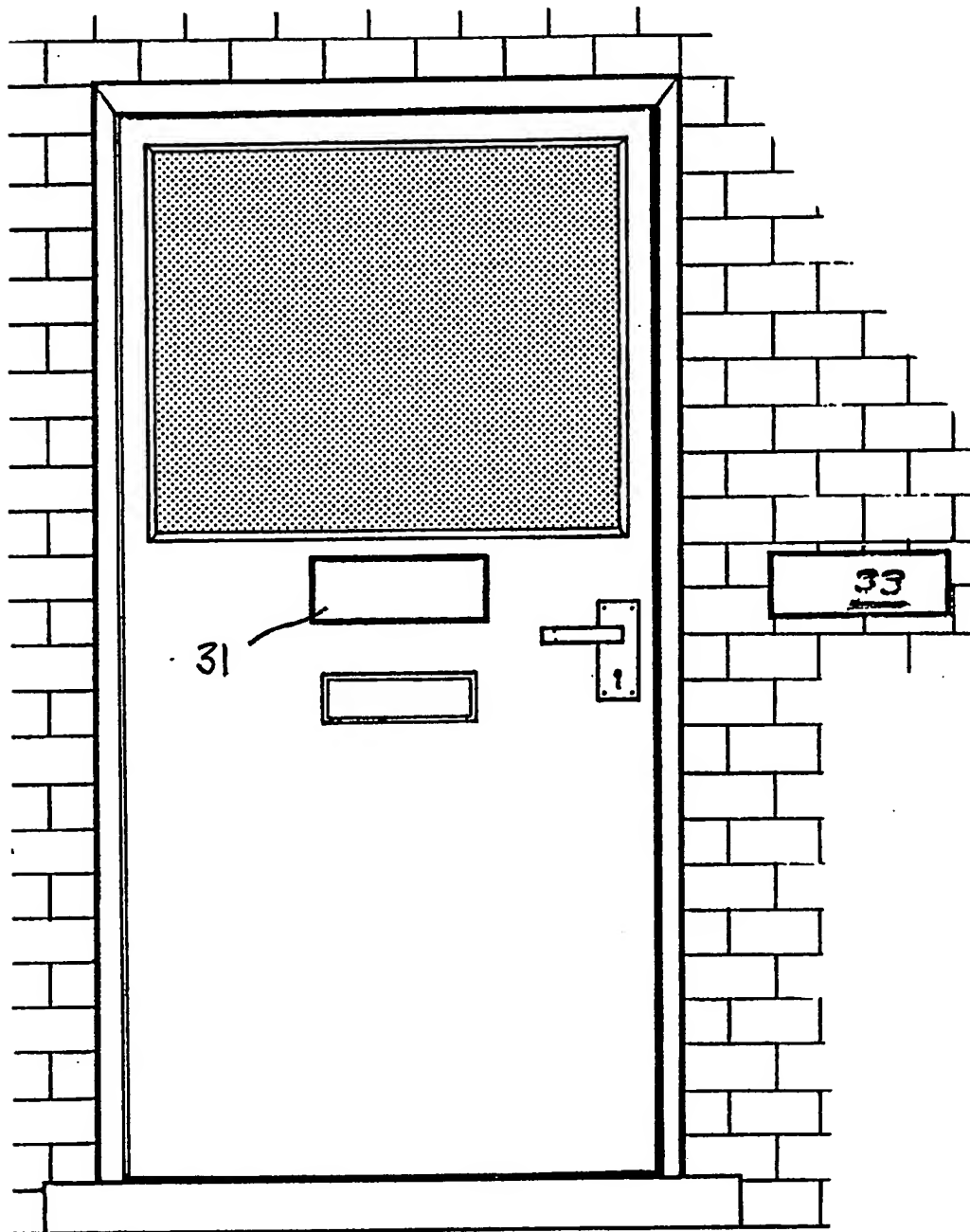


FIGURE 5

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MESSAGE BOARD

Field of the Invention

The invention relates to a message board which can be used with particular advantage in a publicly accessible area to display private messages which are only to be read by a chosen group of people.

5 Message boards have become very popular for temporarily displaying messages. Such message boards range from the write-on/wipe-off boards which can be written on with a special pen and the message then wiped off when no longer required, to cork boards with
10 a set of pins to allow a message written on a slip of paper to be pinned onto the cork board for display. In many cases, message boards have a combination of different areas to receive different types of messages for convenience. These message boards are used in peoples' homes and offices primarily. However, they are not
15 suitable for use in publicly accessible areas such as, for example, adjacent the front door to give messages, for example, to the milkman. The reason for this is that any message written on the message board is perfectly displayed for anyone to read and it clearly is unsatisfactory to advertise the fact that you are going to be absent from home to any passing would-be burglar.

20 Summary of the Invention

According to the invention there is provided a message board

which includes a private message area for receiving and displaying a message, a cover for covering the private message area, and means for locking the cover in position to cover the private message area and being capable of being unlocked to allow the cover to
5 be moved to reveal any message displayed on the private message area.

The private message area may be in the form of a cork board onto which a message can be pinned, a write-on/wipe-off board, a pad of note paper or even a blackboard. Preferably the cover
10 has mounted upon it a pen suitable for writing on the message receiving area.

The means for locking the cover in position may have a standard lock which is opened by a key so that only key holders can have access to the private message area, or alternatively, the lock
15 may be a combination lock so that only people who know the combination can open the message board to look at the private message area.

Typically the owner of the message board will want members of his family and friends to be able to read the private messages,
20 or alternatively, he will want tradesmen such as his milkman to be able to read the message.

Preferably the message board also includes a non-private message area which does not have a cover so that messages which can be read by anyone can be left there. Alternatively the message
25 board may include a set of separate private message areas each having a separate cover and means for locking the cover in position. In this case, each private message area can be intended for a particular reader and so there can be one area for example opened by members of the family, and another which can only be opened
30 by the milkman.

Clearly, it could be time consuming for a visitor to always have to check the private message to see whether there is a message displayed of interest to him. Preferably the message board includes means to indicate whether a message is present on the private message area so that someone looking at the message area knows whether he has reason to open the cover or not. Typically the message board will also include means to indicate to the owner of the message board that the message has been received by the person for whom it was intended. This indicator means may be a simple switch which can be moved into a position to indicate that there is a message present or absent.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Two message boards in accordance with the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the first message board;

Figure 2 is a front view of the first message board when closed;

Figure 3 is a front view of the first message board when open;

Figure 4 is a front schematic view of a second message board; and,

Figure 5 is a schematic view showing two possible locations for the message boards.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

A first message board 1 includes a private message area 3 for receiving and displaying messages, a cover 5 and means 7 for locking the cover 5 in position to cover the private message area but

being capable of being unlocked to allow the cover 5 to be moved so that the messages on the private message area can be read.

Here the message board 1 is made of moulded plastics which define a base frame 9 with a write-on/wipe-off surface forming the private message area 3. Mounted to the body 1 by hinges 11 is the cover which is also of moulded plastics. Four bores 13 allow the message board 1 to be fixed to a vertical surface by screws.

The means 7 for locking the cover in position consists of a combination lock which when the correct combination is pressed allows the cover 5 to be lifted around its hinges 11 to expose the private message area 3 as shown in Figures 1 and 3. A clip 15 is attached to the cover 5 which allows a pen 17 to be clipped to the inside of the cover. The pen 17 is chosen so that it can readily write on the write-on/wipe-off surface 3. Thus, the message board can have a message written on the private message area 3 and the cover 5 is then locked into position. This message board is then mounted in a publicly accessible area. Then anyone visiting who knows the combination of the combination lock 7 can readily open the cover to allow the cover to move to allow the private message to be read.

In a second message board shown in Figure 4 the message board has two message areas. The first message area 19 is one which can receive messages which can be publicly viewed. The lower message area 21 is for private messages and lies under a lockable cover 23. Here the cover 23 is slidable in and out of position and is locked in position by a lock 25 which has a key. A handle 27 allows easy sliding of the cover 23 to expose the underlying private message area 21. In this case, an indicator 29 consisting of a slidable marker is used to indicate whether there is any message for anyone to read. Once the message has been read by the person for whom it was intended the marker 29 can be moved to the appropriate area.

It will be appreciated that the message board may be made of a variety of different materials including brass, wood or plastics and that the private message area may be of any surface capable of receiving messages.

As is shown on Figure 5 the message board may be mounted on a front door as message board 31, or may be mounted on a wall adjacent the front door 33.

CLAIMS

1. A message board which includes a private message area for receiving and displaying a message; a cover for covering the private message area; and means for locking the cover in position to cover the private message, the locking means being capable of being unlocked to allow the cover to be moved to reveal any message displayed on the private message area.
2. A message board according to Claim 1 in which the cover includes means, in use, removably mounting a pen on the cover.
3. A message board according to either of the preceding claims, in which the message board includes a non-private message area which, with the cover covering the private message area, is not covered by the cover.
4. A message board according to any of the preceding claims in which the message board includes a set of separate private message areas, each having a separate cover and means locking the cover in position.
5. A message board according to any of the preceding claims, in which the message board includes means indicating whether a message is present or whether such a message has been received on the private message area, the indicating means being so mounted as to be visible when the private message area is covered by the locked cover.
6. A message board substantially as described herein with reference to, and as illustrated in, Figures 1 to 3 of the accompanying drawings.
7. A message board substantially as described herein with reference to, and as illustrated in, Figure 4 of the accompanying drawings.